

July 9, 2015

**TO: National Organic Program Accredited Certifying Agents
Operating in the United States**

FROM: Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator



RE: Exporting USDA Organic Products to Switzerland

Beginning July 10, 2015, certified organic products of the United States and Switzerland can be represented as organic in each other's market. This memo provides instructions for National Organic Program (NOP)-accredited organic certifying agents per § 205.501(a)(21) to ensure that organic products exported to Switzerland are within the terms of the U.S. – Switzerland Organic Equivalency Arrangement.

Terms of the Arrangement. All organic products traded under the arrangement must:

1. Be certified organic to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), USDA organic regulations, at Title 7, Part 205 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations;
2. Be either grown in the United States, produced in the United States, or be a product for which final processing or packaging has occurred in the United States; and
3. For any wine product, be produced and labeled according to the Switzerland Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) Ordinances on Organic Farming and the Labeling of Organically Produced Products and Foodstuffs (910.18) and Organic Farming of 22 September 1997 (910.181) and its regulations (Swiss Organic Ordinances).

Swiss Import Certificate. NOP-accredited certifying agents must complete a Swiss import certificate for all products traded under the arrangement. Certifying agents must provide the signed Swiss import certificate to the certified operation so that it may travel with the product. Guidance and forms, including the Swiss import certificate, can be found at <http://bit.ly/FOAG-organic-farming>

Wine. Under the arrangement, organic wine and wine “made with organic grapes” may be sold, labeled, and represented as “organic” in Switzerland if the wine:

1. Is produced from 100 percent certified organic grapes (all varieties) and that any other agricultural ingredients (including yeast) are certified organic.
2. Uses only those non-organic substances that are allowed under 7 CFR 205.605. However, wine containing 100 parts per million or less of sulfur dioxide may be sold as “organic” in Switzerland.

3. Is produced only using the winemaking practices and substances detailed in the Swiss Organic Ordinances found at <http://bit.ly/FOAG-organic-farming>.
4. Is labeled according to the Swiss Organic Ordinances (see link above).

Labeling

Retail Products

The USDA organic seal may be used on products traded under the arrangement in the U.S. as well as in Switzerland. In Switzerland, where no official organic logo exists, any organic seal or logo can be used as long as it meets all the labeling requirements applicable in Switzerland. For more information regarding Swiss labeling requirements, see link above.

Organic products. Products certified as “organic” in the United States that are within the scope of the arrangement may be sold as “organic” in Switzerland. Products may include the USDA organic seal.

100 percent organic products. Switzerland does not have a labeling category for 100 percent organic products. Products within the scope of the arrangement may be labeled “organic” and include the USDA organic seal.

“Made with” organic products. Switzerland does not have a labeling category for “made with” organic *** products. For products containing less than 95 percent organic ingredients, a percentage statement of organic content may be displayed on the label. Additionally, the overall percentage of organic ingredients must be stated on the ingredient panel. Products containing less than 95 percent organic ingredients may not be labeled with the USDA organic seal.

Bulk Products

Lot number must be present that allows for a complete audit trail to verify the product’s identity.